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**TAJIKISTAN**

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## PRESS RELEASE

### UNITED STATES DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION NECIA QUAST PARTICIPATES IN FIRST GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY IN TAJIKISTAN



On October 15, Deputy Chief of Mission Necia Quast visited school #4 at Hiloli Jamoat of Khuroson District (Khatlon Oblast) to celebrate Tajikistan's first ever Global Handwashing Day with the school children. Save the Children organized the celebration as part of USAID's Personal Hygiene and Sanitation Education program (PHASE II).

USAID works with the private sector, health facilities, and schools all over the world to help children to improve their own health, hygiene, nutrition, and sanitation. As

part of the PHASE II program, older students were trained to present and disseminate key health messages to their primary school classmates by conducting health classes and by holding health events where hundreds of schoolchildren take the lead to promote healthy behaviors in their schools and communities. The Global Handwashing Day held in the Khatlon region on October 14-15 involved dozens of children from four different schools and included student competitions, skits, discussions, and other activities. Students were invited to design their own public health messages and Village Development Committee members and Child-to-Child teachers chose the best artwork and messages.

The Global Handwashing Day was launched by the Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap (PPPHW) to draw attention to the benefits of handwashing while highlighting the state of handwashing in various countries around the world. Communities appreciated the simple, yet life-saving advice that can have a lasting, positive effect on the health of their children. *"After trainings on personal hygiene our behavior has changed" said one of the participants afterward. "We learned the five rules of handwashing. We are washing our hands with soap and will ask others in our community to do the same."*

PHASE II launched its activities to improve the health and nutrition of primary school children. As a result, hundreds of secondary school students have been trained to pass on information to primary school children. USAID provides support to 80 schools with an enrollment of approximately 40,300 schoolchildren in the Khatlon region through its PHASE II program activities.

The USAID PHASE II project is one of the many assistance projects implemented in Tajikistan by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on behalf of the American people. Since 1993 the American people through USAID have provided more than \$300 million in assistance programs that support economic growth, democratic institutions, health care, and the education system of Tajikistan.